567 A strict distinction and an absolute lack of social equality exist between the black and white Lolo. As the owner of land and cattle, every black Lolo is a potential landlord. He regards as his chattels all kuo-chuang wa-tzu [household slaves] who till the field, tend the cattle, do daily chores, and perform other services for him. Even their very person is a part of the master's possessions, and they can be sold or transferred at his whim. An interesting incident which can serve as an example happened at the time of the author's investigation at the village of Hsi-ning. A black Lolo of the En-cha branch was [525] gambling at P'ing-pien with another black Lolo. He was a heavy loser, and after having emptied all the silver he had with him, he still owed the winner a large debt. He immediately ordered his personal attendant, a household slave, to go with the other black Lolo. The slave, who had served the En-cha black Lolo for a number of years and had grown attached to him, did not want to surrender himself to a new master. So he cried bitterly and refused to obey his master's order. The En-cha black Lolo was so infuriated at this disobedience that he chased the slave to the bank of the Hsi-ning river and while there threw a big stone at him. Fortunately, it missed. There were many eyewitnesses to this incident which demonstrates the relationship between the black and white Lolo.

Household slaves can also be transferred. At the marriage of a black Lolo girl, the maids follow the bride as a part of her dowry. In the division of family property after the parents' death, the slaves and the slaves' children are evenly distributed among the heirs, the male slaves going to the male heir and the female ones to the female heir. Sometimes when the number of slaves is not divisible, they may be purchased with silver or transfered in such a way so as to maintain the principle of equal distribution of the slaves among the heirs.

564 [73] While the black Lolo has absolute authority over
567 his household slaves with the power of life or death, to give or to take away, the white Lolo "subjects" are treated quite differently. These "subjects" have been long-time residents of the village for generations. They own their individual [421 houses, land, and other property. In Ta-liang Shan, if a 428] white Lolo "subject" should die without a male heir or a close relative, the black master could take over his land and property. Lolo tradition, however, forbids the selling of white Lolo "subjects" who consequently have a social status higher than that of the household slaves. During a clan feud, a captured white Lolo "subject" becomes the household slave of

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

565 or for a demand of silver. So lucrative is such an opportunity
631 that even before the lord is dead a "changing of tenancies"
423 takes place. Sometimes, however, the tenants are obstinate and the lord is weak, and then he finds it very difficult to levy his imposts. Occasionally the tenants will refuse all payments, and if they are powerful enough to continue in this passive-resistance policy, in time the land becomes recognised as their own. Several feudal estates have been broken up in this way until such time as one of the tenants or vassals gets strong enough to usurp the position of overlord and to compel his equals to render homage to him. In this way another Earth Eye is evolved and the old story works its way over again.

I remember a case in which the tenants ransomed their overlord from prison. One of the Earth Eyes south of the Yangtse got into trouble with the Chinese Government, and was captured and imprisoned. An almost impossible ransom was demanded by the officials. An attempt was made by the Earth Eye's family to get the tenants on the estate to gather the ransom money. One village went hunting musk deer and were very fortunate in their efforts. They managed to get twenty pounds' weight of musk and with this s..isfied the demands of the rapacious officials. In return for this gift on the part of the villages, the Earth Eye gave them the right over a large portion of his lands and wrote an agreement to that effect. The agreement I have seen, but it was only kept as long as it suited the family of the overlord. The value of the musk would be about ten thousand ounces of silver. A magnificent ransom indeed!

631 One can easily see by the several incidents related that
421 the feudal system among the Nosu north and south of the
● Yangtse is similar to that which existed in Europe during

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Loio AE4

63/421

the Middle Ages. There is, however, one particular in which the system is not complete. The king holds no position in this system. Above the overlords the system changes into the ordinary Chinese mandarin rule. The peculiarity of the system as it exists south of the Yangste is that it exists side by side with the ordinary Chinese land system, which consists in nominal land nationalisation, with land taxes paid as the chief tax of the country. Private ownership exists within this national ownership, and is as certain as private ownership in England or America, except that when land is needed for public works it is taken without hesitation at a nominal compensation. If such were the state of the land question in England, how cheaply our railways and public works could have been built. Unfortunately our English Earth Eyes have long ago taken their toll of all these works and by-and-by the country will have to pay heavily for the fact that in land matters England has not been so wise as China.

In the district south of the Yangtse the feudal system is doomed to fall before long. It will probably exist in independent Nosuland for many decades and possibly generations. One force helping to bring the system to an end in the southern district is the irresponsible character of many of the feudal lords, the Earth Eyes. Were the true story of these written, just as it could be written, concerning the last fifty years only it would make lively reading, and if it were thoroughly understood by the thinking Chinese they would demand an immediate end of this anomalous system and an introduction of the ordinary land system of the whole country, which can hardly be improved on except at the expense of some such terrible revolution as changed once for all the oppressive land system of France.

565 been hereditary, its members are slaves by birth, so that the idea of slavery has been inculcated in them from childhood and it is not easy, as a rule, to break away from social traditions. Secondly, as their culture is very low and their education not much to speak of, the Wa-tzu have therefore never had the means of cultivating the idea of independence and liberty, and they cannot even dream of joining together for a class struggle. Thirdly, although there is no equality whatever in the social positions of the Heh-I and Wa-tzu and this class distinction can never be overcome, nevertheless, in respect to their economic situation and the simple pleasures of life which they enjoy, the Wa-tzu are accorded much more equitable treatment than that accorded the lower classes in other societies. These conditions that contain elements of socialism are actually an important factor in preserving the unequal class system in the I region of Liang-shan, and the chief reason for which the Wa-tzu have never rebelled. The greatest need of the common people in any society is a stable life in which there is safety and protection. More concretely, although the Heh-I consider themselves most superior, they really do not get much more enjoyment out of life than the Wa-tzu: e.g., should a Heh-I invite his Wa-tzu to dine with him at home, the master-slave relationship is of course very clearly defined--the Wa-tzu do not sit at the same table as their master, but dine with the other Wa-tzu. But, regardless of the master and slave status, /110/ the food served is the same for all. This practice differs from that in other places and constitutes an equality greatly enjoyed by the Wa-tzu. A Heh-I family usually leads [527] a very frugal life. Occasionally, however, when a reception is prepared for honored guests (e.g. Chinese officials) or for relatives and friends at a wedding or funeral, the master would summon all his Wa-tzu to enjoy and share the feast with him. From the economic point of view, a Wa-tzu can buy the land which he cultivates himself and need not pay land tax to the Heh-I. His main obligation to his [465] [43] master is to till the latter's field for a certain number of days each year without pay. In addition there are some set customs of presenting gifts for weddings and on New Year's and other occasions, all of which are common expressions of goodwill and not a burden to the farmers. Except for the fact that class inequality can never be surmounted, the relationship of the Wa-tzu and their Heh-I master is similar to that of the tenant and landlord among the Chinese. The [421] Lolo "tenants," however, do not have to pay rent or tax to the government and need only contribute free service to their master. Should

421, 631 AE4 Lolo AE4

[For information pertaining to the feudal organization of the Lolo, see 7: Clarke AE5 Miao, category 116, pp. 120-126.]